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New York

President: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Delegations are invited today to make statements on regional disarmament, confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments, and other disarmament measures and disarmament machinery. They are also invited to continue introducing draft resolutions.

As I indicated yesterday, should time so allow, I would also invite delegations to make statements and introduce draft resolutions under the two subjects slated for tomorrow, first, related matters of disarmament and international security and, secondly, international security.

Ms. Rastovac (Serbia and Montenegro): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your flexibility in allowing me to take the floor on the agenda item on conventional weapons. I would like also to thank the distinguished representative from the Netherlands delegation.

In their statements made yesterday, many representatives pointed to the problem of small arms and light weapons and various ways of dealing with it. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the current activities undertaken in Serbia and Montenegro to destroy the stockpiles of these types of weapons.

On the basis of an agreement between the Ministry of Defence of Serbia and Montenegro and NATO's Maintenance and Supply Agency, as project coordinator, the process of destruction of 23,223 pieces of arms was initiated on 16 October 2003 in the Cacak technical overhaul facility. The price of the project is estimated at €285,000. We would like to express our appreciation to the Netherlands, which will bear a major portion of the cost, and to all other countries that have contributed to this effort.

Another initiative related to the destruction of small arms is being carried out in cooperation with the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Earlier in October this year, in the Smederevo industrial facility, US Steel Sartid, as many as 7,335 pieces of arms were destroyed. The operational costs were covered by the United States Government, for which we are grateful. It is anticipated that an additional 10,000 pieces will be destroyed in the near future, also with the assistance of the United States Government.

Despite the efforts undertaken within the region on disarmament, especially in the field of small arms and light weapons, we have to reiterate that the problem of small arms and lights weapons still pose a threat to the security of our country and the region at large. This problem is particularly pronounced in the province of Kosovo-Metohija, where, according to the report commissioned by the United Nations

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Development Programme (UNDP), there are between 330,000 and 460,000 illegal and unregistered firearms.

Another problem is the illicit trade in these weapons originating from this province of Serbia and Montenegro, due to inadequate border control, for which international presences are currently responsible. We therefore call upon the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force to take additional measures to put an end to the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons within the province and to prevent their spillover to other parts of the region.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I should like to introduce two draft resolutions this morning. The first, draft resolution, A/C.1/58/L.45, is on transparency in armaments; the second, draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.16, is on national legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology.

It is my honour to present to the Committee, on behalf of its more than 100 sponsors, the annual resolution on transparency in armaments, document A/C.1/58/L.45.

It is a good thing that we are looking critically this year at the relevance of the work we are doing here. The items under discussion in the First Committee should reflect our most serious and topical disarmament concerns. The question is, do they? Of course, now is not the time to reopen that debate. But let me just say that, apart from a number of items whose relevance has diminished, there are issues already before us that are quite urgent.

Consider yesterday's issue of *The New York Times*, which ran a front-page article on steps to be taken against the danger of shoulder-fired missiles. We call them MANPADS, or man-portable air defence systems, and they are among the most serious threats to security around the world. These deadly weapons — which are capable of bringing down large passenger aircraft — sell for as little as $5,000 and are known to be in the hands of terrorists. There are tens of thousands of them on the international market. And, once they are in the wrong hands, they are a threat to all of our societies.

This year, we broadened the scope of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We agreed on including smaller artillery systems and MANPADS, to which I just referred. It was the first time since the instrument's establishment that agreement had been reached on significant technical adjustments to its categories. How important is that? Its importance might be twofold — first, because the inclusion of these weapons in the scope of the Register means a broadening of transparency; and secondly, because it shows that we can still take significant steps in the field of arms control. It is encouraging to see that real progress in the field of disarmament can still be made.

I singled out MANPADS, but they are just one example of the relevance of the concept of transparency in armaments in general. That concept is one of the major confidence-building principles among States, enabling the international community to be better informed about military matters and developments. Transparency in armaments thus diminishes misperceptions and helps to prevent information from being distorted. The instrument has developed steadily over the years. Increased participation by States demonstrates growing confidence that transparency can help to prevent the excessive accumulation of arms by also encouraging self-restraint in the military production and transfer of arms.

The growing confidence in the United Nations Register is evident from the upward reporting trend. So far this year, 118 Member States have submitted their reports for 2002. Four new Member States have joined this global reporting instrument for the first time. I should like to congratulate the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Laos and Timor-Leste for joining the Register. A record 164 Member States have now participated at least once in the Register since 1992. Of course, it remains crucial that all of us continue our participation in the coming years.

States that have reported in previous years but not yet this year can still submit their reports to the Secretariat. I would also urge the countries that have submitted a report only once or a few times to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency would significantly heighten the level of participation and thereby the quality and significance of this confidence-building measure. Participation includes so-called nil reports confirming that no transfers took place during the calendar year.

Furthermore, let me express appreciation to the Governments of Canada, Germany and Japan for joining the Netherlands in sponsoring a number of

workshops during the past year devoted to United Nations transparency instruments in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Now is also an appropriate time to again express our sincere appreciation to the secretariat of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in particular Mr. Nazir Kamal, for its efforts in compiling and publishing the Register and assisting Member States in submitting their reports.

The Register has established a de facto norm for transparency in armaments, which Governments must take into account. It provides a significant amount of information, officially reported by Governments, that would not otherwise be available. The Register is important for regional and interregional consultations between Governments, but it also plays an important role in public information, promoting accountability on the part of political and military leaders. Moreover, the Register has spurred many Governments to improve their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers.

All this year's good news notwithstanding, we are still far from true universal participation in the instrument. In that context, it is important to note that the concept of transparency in armaments is certainly not restricted to conventional armaments. The desirability of transparency applies as much to weapons of mass destruction as to conventional weapons. So it is a good thing that multilateral treaties on weapons of mass destruction provide for their own mechanisms to ensure transparency.

We are encouraged by the constructive dialogue that we have developed with countries that are not yet in a position to participate in the Register and cannot yet give their support to this draft resolution. We shall continue to work with them. Therefore, I sincerely hope that the Committee will continue to broadly support the draft resolution on transparency in armaments in general and to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in particular — especially since, in my opinion, it is a fine example of the relevance that the First Committee can have for today's global security challenges.

I should now like to introduce document A/C.1/58/L.16, the second draft resolution sponsored by the Netherlands, on national legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology.

The Netherlands submitted this draft resolution for the first time last year, when it was adopted with the largest possible majority; there were only votes in favour. We believe the draft resolution is important because it recognizes the importance of Member States having effective legislation to control what transfers take place and the movement of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology into or out of their territories. We are convinced that every Member State, in the exercise of its own sovereignty, would want to enact such control over its own territory.

The draft resolution invites Member States that are in a position to do so to enact or improve such legislation and to inform the Secretary-General of such legislation on a voluntary basis. In its preambular part, the draft resolution also recalls the importance of facilitating the exchange of materials, equipment and technological information for peaceful purposes among the parties to relevant disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

I seem to have a certain reputation for transparency and therefore I would like to explain here in the plenary session the changes that I made to the draft resolution this year. Before the resolution on this subject was adopted last year, there was a separate vote on a sub-sentence of the previous second preambular paragraph, in which a reference was made to transfers that could contribute to proliferation activities. A number of Member States at that time abstained on this part of the second preambular paragraph.

As I said, we have now modified the text of this draft resolution to take into account the concerns expressed by these Member States. The reference to proliferation activities is now part of a new second preambular paragraph, which deals with the importance of national controls over transfers. We say in the new text that national control over transfers includes those transfers that could contribute to proliferation activities. We feel this wording is appropriate because, besides proliferation activities, there are also other reasons for establishing national controls over the transfer of arms and military equipment.

A new third preambular paragraph now deals exclusively with exchanges for peaceful purposes.

After consultations with a number of Member States, we will make a small amendment to the second preambular paragraph, replacing the first word, "convinced", by the word "recalling", the same word

used at the beginning of the third preambular paragraph.

I wanted to make this explanation, as I said, in this meeting because I think it is important, and I sincerely hope that these changes to last year's text will enable the Committee to adopt this important draft resolution without a vote.

Mrs. Bonnier (Sweden): First of all, let me thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands for introducing the draft resolution in document A/C.1/58/L.45, on transparency in armaments. Let me also express Sweden's appreciation of the continuous efforts undertaken by the Netherlands on this important issue. Sweden fully supports the draft resolution on transparency and armaments and is a sponsor of the draft, as it has been in the past. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted this year without a vote.

While I have the floor, I would also like to express our appreciation to the distinguished Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina for the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Sweden welcomes this year's highly successful review of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a milestone, we would say, in the Register's 11-year history. Sweden looks forward to a further development of the parameters of the Register.

As far as small arms and the seventh category of the Register are concerned, there is still room for improvement. To this end, Sweden is committed to working actively towards the development of elaborated reporting provisions and thereby enhanced transparency, which was indeed one of the main objectives for establishing the Register in the first place. The need for transparency has never been greater and has increased rather than diminished since the Register was established.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is submitting a draft resolution for the consideration of the First Committee under item 68 of the agenda, which is entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" and contained in document A/C.1/58/L.3.

The rapid innovations in information technology and systems and their application in all spheres of human activity open up unprecedented possibilities for development. Information resources are becoming a more and more valuable element of both nations' and mankind's assets.

In today's world, States depend increasingly on information and telecommunication technology. The issue of the potential use of that technology for purposes that are incompatible with the maintenance of international stability is directly linked to the issue of safeguarding the political and military security of all States. Information technology is a critically important aspect of the national security of States, as well as an element of the overall system of international security.

States have recognized the importance of examining the issue of information security at the international level and the importance of a common approach by the entire international community to the common objective of that exercise. This recognition is reflected in the adoption by consensus in the General Assembly of the five previous resolutions on this issue.

The Secretary-General's report, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", contained in document A/58/373, contains a number of new national points of view and assessments which complement in a significant way those viewpoints and assessments that were submitted earlier by Member States.

In the draft resolution we now submit, it is proposed that a working group of national experts be set up in 2004 that would be tasked with reviewing existing and potential threats to information technology and examining potential joint measures to counteract those threats. The working group would also explore international conceptual frameworks aimed at enhancing global security for information and telecommunication systems and prepare the Secretary-General's report on the results of that work for presentation to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

Russia's view of the discussion on information technology in the Group of Governmental Experts is given in the Secretary-General's report in document A/58/373. We believe it would be appropriate to focus first on issues where there is consensus, in particular, the development of a common conceptual framework and the definition and classification of threats and possible means to counteract them.

The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation to the fifty-eighth General Assembly (A/C.1/58/L.3) contains no fundamental changes from the resolution that was adopted without a vote at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, with the exception of some technical clarifications. I therefore urge delegations to support the Russian draft resolution, and our hope is that, as in previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Pant (Nepal): My delegation has asked for the floor on behalf of some 30 sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.21, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", which we are introducing under agenda item 74 (e).

Following consultations with the sponsors, some technical modifications have been introduced in the text of this year's draft resolution to bring it in line with the Secretary-General's report on the Centre (A/58/190). As in the past, operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution would reiterate the wish of the sponsors to ensure the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu within six months of the date of signature of the host country agreement. In that context, may I inform the Committee that Nepal's commitment to the Centre is unwavering and His Majesty's Government is prepared to provide the necessary support to operate the Centre from Kathmandu.

In our recent discussions with the Secretariat, we have unequivocally communicated Nepal's offer to sign a separate memorandum with sunset provisions in order to address the concerns regarding the security-related costs of the Centre. As a prelude to this, the Secretariat has also been urged to quickly revise the host country agreement and the memorandum of understanding, in accordance with diplomatic practices and precedents. We are now looking forward to a positive response from the Secretariat so that the Kathmandu process may move forward without further interruption.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are confident that the Centre will continue to play a significant role in building confidence among nations in the region, as well as function as an effective tool for disarmament and arms control.

In conclusion, my delegation, on behalf of the sponsors, would like to appeal to all Member States to adopt the draft resolution as in previous years, without a vote.

Before closing, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the fifth and seventh preambular paragraphs, in order to insert some minor technical and editorial modifications. In the fifth preambular paragraph, which lists the countries where regional conferences and workshops were held last year from September onward, in the second line, insert after the word "held", the words "in summer, Republic of Uzbekistan, from 25 to 28 September 2002", and delete the word "on", which is now irrelevant. Also, in the fifth line of the seventh preambular paragraph, after the words "organization of", retain the word "an" and delete the word "a", which is redundant.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My delegation believes that an integrated approach to addressing regional security concerns is an important element of maintaining the peace and security of any given region. In that regard, we reaffirm the crucial role that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific plays in fostering an environment of cooperation and exchange within our own region. The Republic of Korea supports the efforts of the Regional Centre and highly values the Kathmandu process as a useful vehicle for the promotion of dialogue on regional security and disarmament issues. Highly appreciating the Nepalese Government's strong commitment to the Centre, we will continue to extend our political and financial support for the Regional Centre in order to strengthen its programmes and activities.

Recognizing the useful role of the Regional Centre in assisting the region-specific initiatives of Member States, my delegation takes the opportunity to announce that the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Centre, will host a conference entitled, "Global non-proliferation regime in a changing security environment" on Jeju Island, South Korea, from 3 to 5 December this year. The issues to be addressed include the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as missile and verification measures.

Ms. Tasneem (Bangladesh): I take the floor to express the full support of my delegation to draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.21, introduced by the delegate of Nepal. Bangladesh has been a traditional sponsor of

this resolution, and hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

The importance of regional approaches to disarmament and confidence-building measures in enhancing regional security and addressing region-specific problems cannot be overemphasized. The continued arms race, particularly in nuclear weapons in various regions of the world, including in South Asia, remains a formidable threat to regional peace and security. It drains considerable resources at the cost of economic and social development of the people of the region. In that context, we would like to reaffirm that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific serves as an important forum for fostering a climate of cooperation for peace and disarmament in the region. The unhindered progress of the Kathmandu process is critical in promoting dialogue, transparency and confidence-building on specific region-wide security concerns through the organization of regional meetings and dialogue.

Two important preconditions for the effective and meaningful functioning of the Centre are the continued financial and institutional support in strengthening its activities and its full-fledged operation from Kathmandu instead of New York. Bangladesh calls upon all concerned, including Member States and other interested institutions, to sustain and, if possible, enhance their voluntary contributions to support the activities of the Centre. In that regard, we appreciate the valuable overall support provided by the Government of Nepal as the host nation to the Regional Centre. We hope for the early conclusion of a host country agreement and a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Government of Nepal, pursuant to resolution 57/92 (2002).

We welcome the recent initiatives undertaken by the Government of Nepal to address the security concerns of the Secretariat. We join the voice of Nepal in urging the Secretariat to revise the necessary instruments as per relevant international diplomatic practices and precedents. I would like to conclude, therefore, by calling upon the Secretariat to do all that is needed to ensure the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu, enabling it to function more effectively from within the Asia-Pacific Region, where it belongs, thereby contributing to the revitalization of the Kathmandu process.

Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour for me to take the floor on behalf of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.7, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". The text of the draft resolution is the result of a joint, coordinated effort by all the countries of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. The close coordination among all the sponsors shows the great interest of our region in the United Nations Regional Centre, headquartered in Lima, Peru.

Let me briefly highlight a few aspects of our draft resolution. The draft resolution does not contain any major changes this year. Apart from the usual changes required to update it, however, we have introduced new ideas that I wish to emphasize.

First, in the fifth preambular paragraph, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/122), which concludes that the Regional Centre also acts as a facilitator for the implementation of regional initiatives by identifying regional security needs and new areas of cooperation with States and organizations in the region.

Secondly, in the sixth preambular paragraph, we refer to the Centre's initiating a new level of activity in the important area of disarmament and development, and we encourage the Centre to further develop that activity.

Thirdly, in the eighth preambular paragraph, we note with satisfaction the holding of the next General Conference of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, on 5 and 6 November 2003 in Cuba. At that meeting, we shall officially recognize the fact that the Treaty of Tlatelolco is now in force for all the States of Latin American and the Caribbean, making our region the first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In operative paragraph 6, we welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts, which will prepare a report on the relationship between disarmament and development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/65. That report will be of the utmost interest for the role the Regional Centre plays in promoting those issues in the region in pursuit of its mandate to promote economic and social development related to peace and disarmament.

We believe that we have achieved a balanced draft resolution, with all the necessary fundamental elements, which expresses the firm support of our countries for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the Latin and Caribbean Group, as is customary, we hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): I should like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/58/L.17, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", and draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.32, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

As far as draft decision A/C.1/58/L.17 is concerned, I should like to point out that, since 1997, Germany has annually submitted a draft resolution by that title. The draft resolution on consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures has enjoyed growing support among Member States; last year, it was sponsored by more than 100 delegations from all regional groups.

The concept of practical disarmament measures seems to receive continuous attention. We see it as an obligation to carry on the task of promoting practical disarmament measures. Germany feels that it can serve as a valuable tool to implement, to no small degree, the programme of action that is part of the small arms report of July 2001.

With the decision to move to biennialization of the draft resolution, Germany wants to respond to the fact that this subject's operative aspects call much more for practical measures than for political discussions. Such discussions are indeed crucial, and the First Committee remains an important forum for delegations to present their case. We feel, however, that politically contentious issues deserve more time than issues like ours, which are of a rather technical or operative nature. We do not believe that biennialization reflects in any way on the subject's importance.

Germany will — independently of the frequency with which the draft resolution is submitted — remain committed to the promotion of practical disarmament projects. By chairing the group of interested States for practical disarmament measures, Germany is making an effort to actively contribute in that field. A number of smaller projects have been conducted and completed successfully, and a larger project on disarmament education is under way.

I do not wish to hide from the Committee the fact that more active donor involvement would be very welcome, but — as past experience has shown — such involvement cannot be instigated through resolutions. Germany is determined to develop a strategy to reinvigorate the group and to work towards a better understanding of the potential of practical disarmament. I trust that Member States — especially the delegations that have actively endorsed the draft resolution in the past – understand the rationale of our decision and will agree with the approach taken. I can assure the Committee that, during the next session of the General Assembly, as in the previous session, Germany will submit the draft resolution.

I should now like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.32, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures". I should like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations that contributed actively to the further development of the draft resolution during the past weeks. I should also like to thank all nations that sponsored the draft resolution this year; they have brought the number of sponsors to more than 70 nations so far. In addition, I should like to encourage the delegations that are still considering sponsoring the draft resolution to do so.

The German-Romanian biennial draft resolution now before members is a follow-up to the 2001 version. It was slightly reshaped for better understanding and a more logical flow of statements and recommendations. It again encourages Member States having no information to submit nil reports. That would further increase participation, with a view to achieving the goal of universalization. Germany would like to appeal to all countries that have not yet participated to join the instrument by submitting information next year.

I should now like to make some general remarks on the operational side of this draft resolution. Significant progress was recorded this year in the level of participation by Governments in the two global arms transparency instruments maintained and operated by the United Nations Secretariat: the Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, which are based on the Dutch and the German-Romanian resolutions,

respectively. It is encouraging that the number of new participants in the two arms transparency instruments continues to grow, registering significant increases over the past two years.

A promising upturn and a record number of submissions by Governments have been recorded for the United Nations system for standardized reporting of military expenditures. The United Nations Secretariat has received submissions from 74 Governments so far this year. I wish to mention the Governments of certain countries — without specifically naming all of them — that participated in the United Nations system for standardized reporting of military expenditures for the first time by making a submission in 2003. The standardized reporting format covers expenditures on personnel, operations and maintenance, procurement and construction, and research and development. So far, more than 115 Governments have participated in the military expenditure instrument one or more times. Together, those Governments constitute approximately 80 per cent of global military expenditures. Sustained effort is being made by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs to increase familiarity with the procedures of these instruments with a view to encouraging greater and more consistent participation.

A series of regional and subregional workshops was conducted with the assistance of interested Governments in 2002 and early 2003 for Latin America, Western and Southern Africa, together with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Netherlands, Canada, Japan and Germany. These efforts have to enhance and sustain the progress of the global transparency instruments towards fulfilling their respective confidence-building and arms restraint objectives.

We would therefore welcome support from other interested Governments for sponsoring these activities to advance the objectives of arms transparency. I also appeal to those that have participated only once or a few times to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency alone will significantly raise the level of participation each year, thereby contributing to the common goal of transparency. I would like to conclude with the hope that the resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

The President: At this stage I would like to inform the Committee that we currently have twenty-three more speakers on today's list.

Mr. Suseanu (Romania): I will try to be very brief. I take the floor in support of the draft resolution entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures" (A/C.1/58/L.32).

Seventy-four countries have provided national reports this year on their military expenditures and on the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters. It is a positive step forward and an improvement in comparison with the previous years.

The draft resolution, which is now submitted every two years by Germany and Romania, forms a good basis for promoting further openness and transparency in all military matters. At the same time, it has become an important and useful element for building trust and confidence between States worldwide.

Transparency in military expenditures can really help relieve regional tensions and, from that perspective, is an important contribution to conflict prevention. Seventy-two countries have sponsored the draft resolution so far this year. We hope that the broad participation of States in the United Nations standardized reporting system of military expenditure will be further improved. Therefore, we encourage Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their reports on ways to strengthen and broaden participation in the United Nations reporting system and hope that the draft resolution will be adopted again without a vote.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): The credibility and effectiveness of multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regimes is closely linked to the compliance records of the States parties to these regimes. This fact has never been more clearly displayed than today, when some of these regimes face major crises of compliance.

Verification of compliance provides confidence among parties to a regime that negotiated obligations are being fulfilled and, therefore, real security benefits will be realized. Absence of sound, well-established and broadly agreed compliance and verification measures, by contrast, makes analysing and resolving crises that much more difficult. While a presumption of good faith on the part of those entering into binding commitments remains at the core of international

security cooperation, effective verification also remains a critical element of the security cooperation equation.

The United Nations General Assembly has long been supportive of the role that verification can play in international security accords, especially in the realm of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament My delegation has routinely submitted to this Committee a biennial draft resolution entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", affirming the so-called Sixteen Verification Principles, which were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-third session in 1988. These Principles remain valid. and I commend them to you again.

At the same time, and in the spirit of reviewing and rationalizing our working methods, Canada has decided not to introduce this draft resolution again in its current form, but rather to use this thematic session to initiate an exchange of views on the challenges faced in realizing long-standing verification goals under the current circumstances and how we might improve our collective capacity to verify and promote compliance with multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements.

In our view, a substantive discussion of the compliance and verification issue and the consideration of options for improving performance in this field would be a more valuable outcome of this year's First Committee session than the adoption of a general expression of principles that has not changed in over a decade. On the basis of such a discussion, future action may suggest itself, including the possibility of ongoing informal exchanges over the coming year and the submission of a modified draft resolution on the subject.

We have thus submitted a draft decision, and here I confess, Mr. Chairman, our own verification procedures have fallen short and a typographical error has inserted itself: the document is A/C.1/58/L.48 instead of A/C.1/58/L.49. This is a way of having this item inscribed on our agenda next year, with a view to using the coming year to reflect on this important issue. We hope the decision will be adopted by consensus.

As an initial contribution to such an exchange of views, my delegation has the following reflections and ideas to offer. They are informed by the Sixteen Verification Principles, but try to expand their focus, apply them to the current environment and generate some practical suggestions.

First, we should make maximum use of existing machinery. We have elaborate verification procedures in many non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements, and in the case of several of the most important, dedicated international organizations to carry out this work. We should strive to ensure that these organizations are provided with the means and assistance to fulfil their mandates. In addition, States parties should be encouraged to adopt the highest standards of demonstrating their compliance with undertakings and in facilitating the verification tasks of the concerned agencies where such standards and arrangements have been promulgated. The Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a good example in this regard. Broadly, we should also be working to universalize adherence to verification and compliance measures as part of universalizing the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regime as a whole.

Secondly, we should seek ways to strengthen the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regime. Some parts of our multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaty system, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention, have strong verification mechanisms, while others, such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, do not. A similarly wide variation exists in provisions for mechanisms to judge and deal with cases of non-compliance. We should seek productive ways to cooperate in strengthening verification and compliance mechanisms within existing treaties and to ensure that strong measures of this nature are included in newly negotiated instruments as well.

Thirdly, we should ensure that the means of verification keep up with technological developments. Despite all our best efforts, the arms race broadly continues, the evolution of weapons systems constantly challenging verification systems. Fortunately, in a balancing manner, our scientists and engineers continue to develop new means of verification, including both detection and data analysis. The International Monitoring System of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and studies by various groups on the application of satellite-based

remote sensing are but two good examples. However, more could and should be done to ensure that such ongoing advances in verification technology are actually applied as part of the multilateral resolution of compliance issues.

Fourthly, we should review the role of the Security Council. In some of the major multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaties, such as the NPT, the Security Council holds the ultimate responsibility in cases of non-compliance. It would be helpful to consider the role the Security Council can play in a variety of scenarios involving both formal references under such treaties and other references under the rubric of threats to international peace and security. If we place the Council in this position, it is important that appropriate action be forthcoming, and more work needs to be done to examine the political space between treaty regimes and Security Council responsibilities. A few preliminary questions arise. For example, should there be a set time frame for responding to referrals to the Council by treaty organizations? Is there a need for new "rules of the road" to clarify situations where treaty-based verification and compliance efforts have been exhausted and Security Council roles and responsibilities are unclear? Would it be useful to enhance the practical ability of the Security Council to deploy its own fact-finding or investigative teams at short notice?

Fifthly, the role of the Secretary General and Secretariat should be reviewed. Many nuclear non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament instruments, treaty-based and otherwise, lack verification procedures. At the same time, Verification Principle 8 speaks to the need to ensure that, where verification systems do exist, they are reviewed and evaluated in light of experience. In these two respects, are there areas of monitoring or verification of international non-proliferation and arms control and disarmament accords that might be conferred on the Secretary General? Should we be examining means of developing a capacity within the Secretariat to monitor and assist in the verification of commitments in those areas not covered by existing organizations? Could the Secretary-General provide an impartial third-party verification service to States party to bilateral or plurilateral agreements without such integral provisions? Should, as some States have suggested, the specialized expertise and capabilities that have been built up by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) be retained by the United Nations as an internal capacity, perhaps in the form of designated posts within the Department for Disarmament Affairs and/or a roster of previously identified experts on call to support verification or monitoring requirements?

I acknowledge having contributed as many questions as answers in this statement, but we believe it would be most useful to garner the views of all Member States on these issues so closely connected with the success of our disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours, before coming to any conclusions. We look forward to hearing from others in this regard.

Mr. Trexxa (Italy): I will speak on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. I wish to refer to the statement by the representative of Canada with regard to the issue of verification in all its aspects. Although what is proposed this year is a draft decision, which would include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the item entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", Italy, in its position as presidency of the European Union, wishes to draw the attention of the First Committee on the importance that verification in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation plays in Europe in general, and in the European Union in particular.

Let me recall that observations and inspections have had a key role in enhancing security and cooperation in Europe within the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe/Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe process, and that verification is a fundamental feature of arms control treaties, such as the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. The concept of verification is widely referred to in the Thessaloniki Declaration which, as I stated in my address during the general debate, is the most recent and comprehensive document elaborated by the European Union on the theme of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Through that Declaration, the European Union is committed, inter alia, to politically, financially and technically support multilateral institutions charged with verification. In this respect, we underline the key role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and support the rapid establishment of a

verification regime for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. International verification should also be an essential component of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices.

Among the basic principles which have been devised to define the European Union strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, let me draw the Committee's attention to the necessity to insure detectability of violations and compliance through existing verification mechanisms and, if necessary, additional verification instruments. From an operational point of view, the action plan for the implementation of the basic principles contemplates, inter alia, providing the IAEA with an adequate budget increase for implementing its safeguards tasks, promoting challenge inspections in the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and further developing the European Union thinking on verification and inspections in general, and especially on UNMOVIC. We therefore support the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/58/L.48, presented this year by Canada, as in the past we have supported the pertinent resolution on the same subject.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): Given the time constraints, I will try to be brief. It is the firm belief of my delegation that deliberations of the First Committee this year should include a lively discussion of pressing topics, such as compliance and verification. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the statement just made by the Canadian delegation on the issue of verification.

My delegation also appreciates the decision of the Canadian delegation to initiate an exchange of views on this vital issue. It hopes that the interaction on this vital issue will lead to a concrete and useful outcome at this year's First Committee session.

We believe that verification activities cannot be considered in isolation from multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts. Indeed, the full implementation of agreements and effective verification thereof are now more important than ever in ensuring the sustainability and the credibility of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) states the need for verification capabilities to be further developed in order to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements. It is the firm belief of my delegation that the development of verification technologies will make significant contributions in both the fields of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The Republic of Korea stands ready to support any efforts to strengthen the capabilities of those international agencies responsible for carrying out verification activities. In this regard, we express our appreciation to the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the informative reports they have presented during the course of the general debate, outlining the developments made with respect to verification activities.

Recent disclosures have made us acutely aware of the difficulties in detecting clandestine programmes related to weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the further development of verification and monitoring technologies will certainly contribute both to promoting confidence in the compliance of all parties and to detecting illegal clandestine activities.

Moreover, having witnessed the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) enhanced verification methods and technologies put into practice in the resumed inspections in Iraq, we believe there is clearly a need to further enhance the effectiveness of the multilateral verification mechanism through better use of national technical means.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty envisages national technical means, such as satellite monitoring, as a supplementary mechanism that could be used to improve its verification regime. Furthermore, given the IAEA's role as the competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring the compliance of States parties with its safeguards agreement, my delegation views the Additional Protocol as an important tool for the Agency's effective verification of compliance with the non-proliferation obligations provided for in the NPT.

As expressed in our general statement to the First Committee, my Government will soon be ratifying this Protocol.

Ms. Bonnier (Sweden): Let me first of all say that Sweden naturally aligns itself fully with the statement that was just delivered by the Italian

Presidency of the European Union. I would, however, like, on a national level, also to contribute a little bit to the discussion that Canada just called for a short while ago.

Events of the past year have demonstrated that there is a need for enhanced tools at the global level for verification, inspection and analysis with regard to weapons of mass destruction. The International Atomic Energy Agency is mandated to carry out verification and inspection of nuclear facilities. The Chemical Weapons Convention confers a similar mandate upon the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons regarding chemical weapons and facilities.

But when it comes to biological weapons and missiles, there is no international treaty or agreement on which to base similar verification and inspection activities. We are all aware that a major shortcoming of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction is its lack of provisions on compliance monitoring. And to date, there are no international norms covering the production, stockpiling, acquisition and trade in missiles. The Hague Code of Conduct against missile proliferation is a step in the right direction, but it is not a legally binding instrument, nor does it contain provisions concerning compliance monitoring.

What we have, however, is a well-developed instrument to carry out inspections regarding biological weapons and missiles. We have the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). The legal framework for its activities is provided by Security Council resolution 1284 (1999). We are all aware that UNMOVIC was set up for a very specific purpose, and that its mandate is temporary. The verification, inspection and analysis expertise that has been built up within UNMOVIC and its predecessor, the United Nations Special Commission, has proven its value. It enjoys the legitimacy that can only be derived from the United Nations. The question is, what will happen to UNMOVIC when its present tasks have been concluded? And what can be done for the United Nations to retain its verification and inspection expertise?

Security Council resolution 1483 (2003), adopted this year on 22 May, underlines the intention of the Security Council to revisit the mandate of UNMOVIC as set forth in several earlier resolutions. To this date, this has not happened, and UNMOVIC has continued working under those parts of its mandate that remain operable. The Secretary-General's 15th quarterly report on the activities of UNMOVIC is due around 1 December 2003. This report will hopefully prompt the Council to make a decision on the future of UNMOVIC.

I would like to suggest two possible options for consideration:

First, discussions have taken place in recent weeks on how the United Nations Secretariat could be reformed in order to be better able to meet persistent and new threats against international peace and security, for example, threats posed by States that are in non-compliance with international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, and the risk that non-State actors acquire weapons of mass destruction. To make UNMOVIC a permanent resource of the United Nations Secretariat could be a step in that direction.

Secondly, an option would be to transform UNMOVIC into a regular subsidiary organ of the Security Council, along similar lines as the Counter-Terrorism Committee. To this end, a roster of experts could be established. Inspection and verification activities, carried out by experts provided by Member States, could thus be activated by Council action, most likely in the form of a Council resolution in a given case.

As a non-member of the Security Council, Sweden wanted to take this opportunity to stimulate a discussion within the general membership of the United Nations. Out hope is to solicit support for the ideas of retaining the verification, inspection and analysis expertise in the services of the United Nations. Let me, without prejudging the outcome of such a discussion, close by encouraging the Security Council to consider how best to retain the expertise now vested in UNMOVIC.

The Chairman: Let me simply observe at this stage, from the Chair's point of view, that this discussion initiated by Canada, even in the absence of a substantive draft resolution for this year, has already provided a good basis for an interactive thematic discussion, and I would encourage delegations, either today or tomorrow, to continue it.

Mr. Grönberg (Finland): May I first state that, although I am speaking here as a member of the Finnish delegation, I do so, in fact, on behalf of the Presidency of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Conference, which took place in Vienna in September 2003.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 1996, and was opened for signature in New York on 24 September of the same year. On that same day, 71 States signed the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. For the Treaty to enter into force, the deposit of the instruments of ratification by 44 States listed in annex II to the Treaty is required. This rather exceptional rule was developed in order to guarantee that all those States who possess nuclear knowledge would be taken on board.

As it seemed likely that additional efforts would be needed to guarantee entry into force, a mechanism to promote this was developed. In article XIV of the Treaty, it is stipulated that in the event that the Treaty has not entered into force three years after the date of its opening for signature, the depositary of the Treaty shall, upon request of a majority of ratifiers, convene a conference of the ratifiers to consider, and decide by consensus, what measures consistent with international law might be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty. The first conference of this kind was held in Vienna in October 1999, under Japanese Presidency, and the second conference in New York in November 2001, under Mexican Presidency.

As of March of this year, 31 States of the 44 listed in annex II had ratified the Treaty. It was recognized that more remained to be done to fulfil the requirement for entry into force. Against that background, States signatories came to an agreement that another conference pursuant to article XIV, facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty, needed to be convened, and that Finland would chair the preparations for that conference.

The Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty was held in Vienna from 3 to 5 September this year. The Conference elected the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, as the President of the Conference and representatives of Italy, Morocco, New Zealand, Poland and Venezuela as Vice-Presidents. The Conference was attended by 102 States signatories, 5 non-signatory States, 7 international organizations and 19 non-governmental organizations. Of the States participating in the Conference, 31 were represented at the ministerial, or vice-ministerial level and the high-level of participation is a good proof of the importance States attach to the Treaty.

The Conference held four plenary meetings, in which a general exchange of views on facilitating the entry into force of the Treaty took place, with statements made by representatives of 66 States, including both ratifiers and signatories. Statements were also made by two participating, non-signatory States and non-governmental organizations. The representative of Mexico presented a progress report to the Conference on cooperative efforts to facilitate the entry into force of the Treaty since the Second Conference held in New York in November 2001. An information kit was distributed, examples of which can be found on the table at the back of this room. Those who feel it might be of interest, should feel free to take one; it gives a good picture of what the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization is doing.

The Conference decided to establish a committee of the whole to consider specific measures to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was subsequently chaired by the representative of Japan. An exhibition on the global verification regime for the CTBT and a seminar on the civil and scientific benefits of the Treaty were also organized in connection with the Conference.

The Conference noted that 168 States had signed the Treaty, 104 States had deposited their instruments of ratification and, of the 44 States listed in annex II to the Treaty, 41 had signed and 32 had also ratified. This means that the requirements set out in the Treaty for its entry into force have not been met. On a positive note, we clearly have been moving in the right direction. That is, since the convening of the 2001 Conference, 20 more States have ratified the Treaty — including one annex II State — and 7 more have signed it. In the final declaration adopted by consensus at the Conference, the participating States addressed the particular importance of prompt signature and ratification by those States whose ratification was needed for the Treaty's entry into force, but who had not yet ratified it.

Noting that the international developments that have occurred since the 2001 Conference make the entry into force of the Treaty as urgent today as when it was negotiated, the Conference reaffirmed that CTBT has an essential role to play in strengthening global peace and security and that prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was one of the most important challenges facing the world. Furthermore, the Conference considered it essential to maintain momentum in elaborating a verification regime capable of meeting the Treaty's verification requirements. The verification system, once it enters into force, will be of an unprecedented global reach and will therefore be able to ensure that States maintain their Treaty commitments.

Although the Treaty has not entered into force, it can be said that its fundamental objective has been attained, as all States have continued to refrain from detonating nuclear weapons. The Conference thus called upon all States to continue their moratoria on exploding nuclear weapons in the context of nuclear tests or for any other purpose.

Aside from adopting the final declaration, the Conference decided this time to adopt a list of concrete measures to be taken to promote the early entry into force of the Treaty. That is a novel approach that I hope will serve its purpose and bring us a bit closer to our goal. The list consists of 12 measures. I will not burden you by enumerating them all, as they can be found in the declaration. I would, however, like to highlight a few of the measures.

We decided to establish a contact list of countries that had ratified the Treaty that would volunteer to assist the coordinator in various regions. Here I would like to pay tribute to all those countries that, during the preparatory phase, indicated their willingness to assist the coordinator in actively promoting the entry into force of the Treaty in their regions. We also agreed that ratifying States would consider appointing a special representative to assist the coordinating State in the performance of its function in promoting the entry into force of the Treaty. Those two new measures broaden decisively the resources available for promotional activities and I welcome them as truly important innovations.

It was further recommended that ratifying States consider establishing a trust fund, financed through voluntary contributions, to support an outreach programme for the promotion of the Treaty.

We also decided to encourage the organization of regional seminars in conjunction with other regional meetings in order to increase awareness of the important role the Treaty has to play. The intention, here, is to organize meetings and seminars on a political level in order to enhance understanding of the importance and benefits of the Treaty. It goes without saying, we also appeal to the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization to continue its own international cooperation activities and organization of seminars for experts in the legal and technical fields, as well as to continue promoting understanding of the Treaty and demonstrating the benefits of the civil and scientific applications of the verification technologies in such areas, inter alia, as the environment, earth science and technology.

We believe that, as we have seen in other contexts, non-governmental organizations can play an important role in awareness-building. Accordingly, we encourage cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other elements of civil society to raise awareness of and support for the Treaty and its objectives.

The implementation of the measures adopted at the Conference will be discussed at a meeting of the ratifying States to be convened in November. At that meeting, the presidency of the Conference will, it is expected, be selected as the coordinator of the work to be undertaken to implement the measures agreed upon. In performing his duties the coordinator will be assisted by a group of friends of the coordinator composed of the countries on the contact list, which have volunteered to assist the coordinator in various regions, as well as any other countries wishing to take an active part in implementing the measures.

At the conference of ratifying States to be held in November, some of the measures listed in the final declaration will be more closely discussed and considered, as the time available at the Conference did not allow us to go into detail.

As Finland held the presidency of the Vienna Conference, we are very content that it had a successful outcome and we would like once again to express our appreciation and gratitude to all the Conference participants for their willingness to cooperate and compromise. We do hope that the final declaration and

the measures to be implemented will bring the entry into force of the Treaty a bit closer. It is clear, however, that the successful organization of the Conference can in no way be interpreted as signifying that the work has been completed. On the contrary, before the Treaty enters into force much remains to be done. In that endeavour we rest assured that we can count on the good cooperation of all the parties involved, just as they enabled the Conference itself to come to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Shloma (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The issue of control is becoming increasingly significant at both the regional and international levels, and there is a need for effective verification to ensure global security and stability. In our region, the uncontrolled proliferation of military technology can lead to conflicts that may spread to other regions.

The Republic of Belarus believes that confidence-building measures are one of the key elements of control at the regional and subregional levels. Such measures include strengthening regional capacity as an essential component of international security and avoiding the risk of the eruption of conflict, which in turn will lower the risk of incorrect interpretation of military activity, of accidental invasion and of other military incidents. By creating a climate of mutual trust — an essential element — such confidence-building measures can lead to balanced reductions in weapons and more effective functioning of the disarmament regime. We commend those countries that have concluded bilateral and multilateral measures in this area, and we call upon other States to support measures conducive to such agreements at the regional and subregional levels.

An important element in the further development of the disarmament regime is a system aimed at flexibility in arms control in various regions of the world. We need to ensure the inalienable right of States to a certain level of security so that States and groups of States that have reached agreements cannot achieve superiority over other States at any stage of the system's development.

We should like to refer to the importance of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is a key element of European security. The Republic of Belarus was an active participant in the negotiations on the Treaty and was one of the first States to ratify it. Now we are moving from the old system — characterized by blocs and confrontation in Europe — to a new one based on cooperation and confidence. In addition, the adaptation of the Treaty has opened the door for other States to join it. The Republic of Belarus would like to see the swift entry into force of the Treaty and the joining of new members. That would strengthen European security and increase transparency in the area of arms control on the European continent, which would serve as a stimulus for States in other regions of the world. In that connection, we strongly appeal to other Member States that have not yet done so to sign the agreement on adaptation of the Treaty as soon as possible. We should also like to consider developing principles that could provide a basis for the negotiation of regional conventional arms control agreements at the Conference on Disarmament.

The Republic of Belarus, emphasizing its previous arms control policy, has become a sponsor of the draft resolution on that subject. The Republic of Belarus shares the international community's concern about the problem of anti-personnel mines. That fact was demonstrated by our de facto joining the international moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines in 1995 and extending its participation through the end of 2007.

Recently, the Republic of Belarus, in a clear demonstration of the consistency of its policy, deposited with the Secretary-General its instruments of accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention. Pursuant to the Convention, our country must destroy its stockpiles of landmines within four years. Belarus requires considerable financial and technological resources to ensure the elimination of the more than 4 million anti-personnel mines we inherited after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Before acceding to the Convention, Belarus had destroyed more than 100,000 of those landmines on its own.

It should be noted that conventional anti-personnel mines can be disposed of either by incineration or by open detonation. However, because of ecological concerns, those methods cannot be applied to mines with liquid explosives, and we have 3.6 million of such mines. In the light of those circumstances, we appeal to Governments, international agencies and non-governmental

organizations to assist the Republic of Belarus in its efforts to eliminate its stockpiles. All forms of technical, technological and financial assistance will be warmly welcomed.

The Republic of Belarus actively cooperates with the United Nations on mine-related problems, mindful of the Organization's important coordinating role in that field. Information concerning the need to assist Belarus on the issue was provided to the participants in an international seminar on mine-related problems, held in Minsk in March 2000, as well as to the representatives of the United Nations Mine Action Service who visited Belarus in August 2000. The report on the results of the United Nations fact-finding mission concluded that it was necessary to assist Belarus in eliminating its anti-personnel mine stockpiles.

The Ottawa Convention has become a powerful tool that provides us with an opportunity to achieve the complete elimination and total prohibition of anti-personnel mines, which cause enormous human suffering on every continent. I hope that the increasing trend towards strict implementation of the Convention will help us to accomplish our mission honourably.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I should like to begin by reaffirming and reiterating the Movement's commitment to promoting international peace and security through disarmament measures. Our positions on disarmament and international security issues are reflected clearly in the decisions made at the XIII Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 25 February 2003. NAM would also like to strongly reaffirm its view that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provide the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues.

As our contribution to the multilateral disarmament process, I now have the honour to introduce five draft resolutions and two draft decisions on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as contained in the following documents.

The first is document A/C.1/58/L.24, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace". By adopting this draft resolution, the General Assembly would reaffirm its determination to preserve the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace for all time, as called for by the Declaration. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean would also be requested to continue his consultations with the members of the Committee on the implementation of the Declaration. We trust that the draft resolution will continue to enjoy overwhelming support.

The second document is A/C.1/58/L.25, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". That draft resolution was updated to take into account the discussion of the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, for the fourth special session on disarmament. Before proceeding further, I would like to make some oral amendments to operative paragraphs 2 and 4 of that document, as follows:

In operative paragraph 2, the words "fifty-ninth session" should read "sixtieth session", and in operative paragraph 4, the words "sixtieth session" should read "sixty-first session".

The draft resolution calls for the General Assembly to convene another working group with the same mandate before the end of its sixtieth session. We hope that the General Assembly will give its support by adopting the draft resolution without a vote, as was the case at the last session. We also hope that the cooling-off period will enable delegations to start anew and engage in substantive discussion in the Working Group with a view to convening the fourth special session.

The third draft document is A/C.1/58/L.26, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation". As you are aware, this draft resolution was introduced at the last session. As I stated earlier, the Non-Aligned Movement believes strongly in multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as the only sustainable way of addressing disarmament and international security issues.

At a time when multilateralism and the United Nations itself are faced with challenges such as the doctrine of pre-emptive action, we believe that it is critical for the General Assembly to adopt such a resolution. The draft resolution embodies the desire of the international community for multilateral

cooperation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Much is at stake, including the danger of the unravelling of existing international disarmament treaties. In that regard, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted with overwhelming support.

The fourth draft resolution is document A/C.1/58/L.27, dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control". The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) considers the issue to be important item on our agenda. At the last session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/64 (2002) with overwhelming support. The global environment is an issue of the utmost importance, especially for succeeding generations, and we should try to ensure that we take the necessary measures to preserve and protect it by drafting and implementing agreements on disarmament and arms control. NAM hopes that all delegations will join in supporting the draft resolution.

The next draft, document A/C.1/58/L.28, dated 15 October 2003, is entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament". These centres have been instrumental in promoting understanding and cooperation among States in their respective regions in the fields of peace, disarmament and development. We hope that the centres will continue to receive the support, especially that of Member States, with a view to the implementation and strengthening of their activities and programmes.

The sixth draft, document A/C.1/58/L.29, dated 15 October 2003, is entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". This draft decision is introduced pursuant to resolution 57/65 (2002) of 22 November 2002. At its last session, the General Assembly decided to establish a group of governmental experts in 2003 to review the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context and to present its report for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. We expect that the panel will be established as soon as possible so that it may carry out its mandate and request the General Assembly to take the necessary action at the next session to that end. The Non-Aligned Movement intends to pursue the matter further in this Committee and the General Assembly at the next session.

The final document that I wish to introduce today is a draft decision (A/C.1/58/L.30), dated 15 October 2003, entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security". At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted a similar decision, namely, decision 56/417, and the Non-Aligned Movement is introducing the present text with a view to the Committee taking a similar decision at this session.

In conclusion, may I state that the Non-Aligned Movement believes in the vital importance of multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in addressing disarmament and international security issues. The draft resolutions and decisions that I have introduced are submitted for the consideration of this Committee in that spirit. We are confident that, in that same spirit, those draft resolutions will continue to receive the support of Member States. We have no doubt that their adoption and implementation will contribute significantly to the international community's aspiration to resolve the issues of disarmament and international security. At this juncture, on behalf of members of the Non-Aligned Movement, may I express our sincere appreciation to the delegations that support our draft resolutions and decisions.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and I also wish to thank him for having made a clustered introduction of a total of six documents, which, in my view, greatly contributes to the efficient and effective work of this Committee.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Uruguay wishes to speak on behalf of the member States of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and its associated States — Bolivia and Chile — to address the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Our six countries, besides having ratified the Treaty, have already expressed individually — and on more than one occasion — their opposition to nuclear weapons of any kind. Likewise, it should not be necessary to reiterate their similar opposition to any kind of nuclear testing. To be the first organized subregion to prohibit nuclear testing is a clear demonstration of our position with regard to the issue. With the same clarity of purpose, our countries, through the Organization of American States, have supported the call to other countries of our region to adhere to or ratify the Treaty. That position reflects the

fact that although we support maintaining the moratorium over nuclear testing, we believe it is not enough and the CTBT offers the reasons why.

The CTBT has several characteristics that make it a positive instrument for non-proliferation and disarmament. Its non-discriminatory nature and its universal scope make the CTBT an adequate complement to the network of instruments designed to preserve security. And in a global scenario of uncertainty, the ban on nuclear testing acquires an even larger relevance, since it represents a concrete step that allows us to receive or send clear signals regarding the commitment of States with regard to a planet free from nuclear weapons.

For this reason, and even though we have not yet reached the necessary number of ratifications to make the CTBT an effective tool, MERCOSUR and associates wish once more to draw attention to it and calls for accession or ratification to it as soon as possible.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): Today I am taking the floor in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament in order to present to the First Committee the report of the Conference on its work during the 2003 session and to introduce the corresponding draft resolution (A/C.1/58/L.5).

The report of the Conference on Disarmament has been issued as document A/58/27. The factual summary of its work in 2003, contained in the report, indicates that, again this year, the Conference on Disarmament has not achieved noticeable progress in terms of substantive work on the issues on its agenda. However, that does not at all mean that significant developments have not taken place.

Indeed, after the adoption of the agenda at the beginning of its 2003 session, the Conference immediately entered into the exploration, inter alia, of the possibilities generated by the official submission of a cross-group proposal on the programme of work drafted by five Ambassadors, former Presidents of the Conference, commonly known as the A5 proposal. Its subsequent revision by them has led to the broadening of support for the proposal and we witnessed constructive efforts to seek common ground in this regard, particularly towards the end of the session.

In addition, the successive Presidents and all delegations made various efforts throughout the session to revitalize the Conference. In the process, not only was the programme of work per se addressed, but significant contributions were also made to providing substantive discussion on specific issues in the plenary meetings through the submission of working papers and presentation of statements on substantive topics.

Furthermore, some new ideas were pursued, especially from the perspective of making the Conference more responsive to the new challenges to arms control and disarmament.

Moreover, other options that could facilitate an agreement on the programme of work were explored, including cooperation and exchange of information between the Conference on Disarmament and other intergovernmental organizations concerned with disarmament. The Conference also considered possible ways of enhancing the contribution of civil society to its work.

The Conference benefited considerably from the visits of dignitaries and high-level officials. In 2003, the Conference was addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Her Excellency Mrs. Yoriko Kawaguchi, as well as by eminent officials from India, Norway, Pakistan and the United States of America.

This common strong interest in utilizing this important institution for international peace and security has been clearly demonstrated, and active efforts to achieve that end have been made throughout this year's session. It is nevertheless true that the Conference did not agree on a programme of work to establish any subsidiary body on specific items on its agenda.

As I emphasized in my statement at the conclusion of the 2003 session, the programme facing the Conference remains the same as before, that is, how to strike a balance among different priorities in its programme of work. The report indicates two general approaches that have been evident in this regard. Some delegations were of the view that linkages should not be established between elements of the programme of work and/or of the agenda, while others stressed the need for a comprehensive approach. It seems that this dilemma can only be solved if, in the preparation for the next session, Conference members not only give consideration to their own priorities, but also reflect seriously on how to balance their priorities with those of others.

The report clearly indicates that the members of the Conference on Disarmament are vitally interested in commencing substantive work early in the 2004 session. In order to facilitate that task, the Conference requested me and the incoming President to conduct consultations during the intersessional period and, if possible, make recommendations, taking into account all relevant proposals, including the revised A5 proposal contained in document CD/1693/Rev1, views presented and discussions held.

The Conference also requested both of us to endeavour to keep the membership informed, as appropriate, of those consultations. I have already begun consultations in close coordination with Ambassador Amina Mohammad of Kenya, the incoming President. I will make every effort, until the end of my presidency and in the face of this formidable challenge, to prepare the way for next year's Conference to begin substantive work on priority items on its agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, which is contained in document A/C.1/58/L.5. While following in general the usual pattern and content of resolutions on the subject adopted without a vote at the previous sessions of the General Assembly, this year's draft resolution also attempts to send a clear political message that there is an urgent need for the Conference to commence substantive work, as provided in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft.

I deem it necessary and appropriate at this political juncture to articulate a sense of urgency. It is absolutely crucial for all States to embrace this sense of urgency in the lead-up to the 2004 session, so that the Conference may finally bring its stalemate to an end.

We have also developed a new paragraph, operative paragraph 5, which requests all member States of the Conference to cooperate with the current President and successive Presidents in their effort to guide the Conference to the early commencement of substantive work in the 2004 session. It is essential for the Presidents to be assured of full cooperation from all member States by deeds, not only by words, in their efforts to achieve a decision by consensus.

The resolution also highlights in its fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs the main developments taking place at the Conference during its 2003 session, such as active discussions on the programme of work, significant contributions to promote substantive discussions on issues on the agenda in the plenary meetings and discussions held on other issues that could also be relevant to the current international security environment.

Finally, as was the case with last year's resolution, operative paragraph 4 stipulates that the current and incoming Presidents are requested to conduct consultations during the intersessional period and if possible, make recommendations. This paragraph has been drafted on the basis of paragraph 38 of the Conference on Disarmament report that I have just presented.

The Conference on Disarmament deals in its work with the most pressing security issues in the entire world, and therefore the continuing impact on this body of such issues is a source of concern for us all. Needless to say, the problems facing the Conference on Disarmament are a reflection of current world political dynamics which complicate the conditions surrounding multilateral disarmament efforts. We should redouble our common efforts to overcome these problems. In view of the difficulty of the task that is so important to the world, this year's draft resolution goes beyond the usual procedural pattern and sets forth the clear political commitment of the entire international community working cooperatively, as a matter of urgent priority.

In my current capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I am introducing this draft resolution with the determination to carry forward my consultations in such a way as to foster a favourable environment in which successive presidents will be able to meet the high expectations of the world community. In this regard I will continue to count on the tireless spirit of cooperation and flexibility which is essential in pursuing global interests and which has already been amply demonstrated by delegations throughout this year's annual session, as well as during my consultations on this draft resolution. I recommend that the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.5 be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Kmentt (Austria): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, and to offer our full support to you. I am taking the floor to thank Japan and in particular Ambassador Inoguchi for her efforts regarding the draft

resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.5. There are some formulations in the draft resolution that clearly express the sense of urgency that the international community feels regarding the stalemate that has been imposed on the Conference on Disarmament and that has prevented substantive work for seven years. In this regard I would like to recall the statement of the European Union in the general debate on this issue. We think that it is highly appropriate that the General Assembly expresses this sense of urgency.

As many of you might know, Austria considered tabling a separate draft resolution with exactly that aim. We have decided not to table it, but I would like to explain the thinking behind our proposal, which was based on the fact that the Conference on Disarmament, although an independent body, is linked to the General Assembly by a very formal relationship. The Conference on Disarmament's requirement to report to the General Assembly under its rules of procedure numbers 43 to 46 stems from that formal relationship. Since 1997, these reports to the General Assembly have been devoid of progress. Consequently, and as a matter of responsibility, a more direct engagement with the General Assembly is therefore required than the Assembly's merely taking note of the factual report. This responsibility is all the more pressing at a time of widespread international concern about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery as well as about such weapons and nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists and, generally, about the commitment to nuclear disarmament. The current situation therefore merits that the United Nations General Assembly with its universal membership, express its concern about the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and urge the Conference on Disarmament's member States to overcome their outstanding differences.

Consequently, we thought it to be appropriate to give members as well as non-members of the Conference on Disarmament the chance to express their dissatisfaction with the current stalemate and their wish for substantive progress on disarmament issues. We also wanted to bring to the attention of the broader membership of the United Nations the ongoing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament over its programme of work.

In doing so, it was our goal to underline the fact that the overwhelming majority of States is of the same conviction regarding the need to start substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament and thereby increase the pressure on the Conference on Disarmament to resolve the impasse over its programme of work at the outset of 2004. All delegations which have taken the floor in this Committee, have expressed their wish that the Conference on Disarmament adopt a programme of work at the beginning of 2004 and begin its work. Our draft resolution was initially elaborated precisely to give expression to that shared desire.

At the end of the 2003 session, as just mentioned by Ambassador Inoguchi, there were some encouraging signs of movement. We very much appreciate the flexibility demonstrated by some States regarding their readiness to join consensus on the basis of the amended version of the five ambassadors proposal contained in CD/1693 Rev.1.

Intensive consultations in Geneva and during the last few weeks in New York on the basis of our draft, clearly showed to us that our approach was widely shared. However, some delegations expressed concern about the timing of such a draft resolution, given the fact that some movement towards overcoming the Conference on Disarmament's situation might be possible.

It was and is, of course, our only intention to be constructive and to do whatever we can to help in this process. We have therefore decided not to table our draft resolution this year, as we do not want to do anything that could be considered counterproductive at this very crucial moment.

However, let me be clear that we — and I am sure the vast majority of the international community — now have a very clear expectation that the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament will be overcome at the beginning of next year's session. We are optimistic that we will not have to reconsider our draft resolution next year.

In closing, I would like to stress again our support for the current and the incoming presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in their efforts to achieve this goal, as well as Austria's appreciation and support for the amended proposal of the five ambassadors.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is with great satisfaction that we welcome the new report of the Secretary-General on the maintenance of

the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons and its improvement.

In the 10 years since it has been established, the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons is a voluntary mechanism which has had its scope expanded, not only because of the outstanding job that was done by the group of governmental experts under the leadership of Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan, but also because States have understood that the objective of transparency is mutually beneficial. During the period of time that has passed, participation in the Register has expanded and we hope it will be maintained and consolidated over time. For this reason we would like to express our support for the draft resolution introduced by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, Mr. Sanders, and we invite delegations to join as sponsors.

There is no doubt that the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons requires further adjustments. But we are making progress in the right direction. The Register plays an important role in promoting confidence and in improving and strengthening bilateral and regional dialogues. For that reason, we would also invite others to join efforts to continue working towards its improvement and universalization.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): The United States delegation wishes briefly to introduce our draft resolution, A/C.1/58/L.15, entitled "Enhancing the contribution of the First Committee to the maintenance of international peace and security".

In the interest of brevity, I shall summarize orally our written presentation, which we have asked the Secretariat to distribute to delegations.

The United States believes that Member States should examine how the First Committee can best manage its annual schedule to permit a fuller examination both of its existing agenda and of new threats to our common security. As the Secretary-General rightly concluded last month, "We must not shy away from questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal". (*A/58/PV.7*)

To have the time to focus on such issues, however, the First Committee needs to find ways to streamline its work. The Committee also needs to ensure that its agenda does not duplicate, or subtract from, important work already being done in other United Nations forums or outside the United Nations system.

Our draft resolution neither proposes nor commits Member States to a specific course of action. Rather, it enables Governments to present national views on this important topic that the Secretariat would merely compile and distribute to all Member States in an organized manner for us all to review before the First Committee reconvenes next year. That, we believe, is both the minimum and the most that the Member States can ask of one another as this process commences.

Our delegation wishes to inform the Committee that we are consulting with a number of delegations on potential amendments to the preamble of our draft resolution that would make clear the duty of the Committee to seek to address both persistent threats to our common security and new threats that have become manifest in the period following the events of 11 September 2001.

We have an opportunity during this session to contribute in a collective manner to the ongoing effort by the Secretary-General and by the President of the General Assembly to make the General Assembly a more effective body. Indeed, just one week ago, we all heard President Hunte say here that he had read the various proposals for improving the work of the First Committee and that such work "would complement our work in the General Assembly". Delegations will recall that President Hunte also said, and again I quote, "I encourage every Committee, including the First Committee, with proposals for reform that enjoy broad support to put them into place this year".

The United States stands by President Hunte and by the Secretary-General on this issue. We firmly believe that our improvement initiative will complement and feed into the broader effort to revitalize the General Assembly and therefore that our draft resolution merits adoption without a vote. Together, let us seize this opportunity to begin a process that will renew the ability of the First Committee to contribute in a meaningful way to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Varma (India): We have taken the floor in order to introduce a draft resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, under agenda item 74 (f), as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.33. The resolution

is sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Viet Nam and Zambia, and my own country, India.

Since 1989, India has brought before this Committee the resolution entitled, "The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament". Significant progress in science and technology, especially recent advances information technology, advanced materials, biotechnology and space applications, offer vast possibilities for socio-economic development. Access to those technologies for developmental purposes is undoubtedly a crucial prerequisite for developing countries, including their participation in global trade. That fact has been recognized by various conventions for arms control and disarmament. For example, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction, offered an opportunity to put in place a multilaterally negotiated non-discriminatory and legal mechanism that will address proliferation concerns about transfers, while promoting the economic interests of States Parties. The Chemical Weapons Convention has placed an obligation on the States Parties to review their existing national regulations in the field of trade in chemicals in order to make them consistent with the Convention.

India has recognized that the dual-use character of many of the advances in science and technology and the potential for their use for both civilian and military applications, is a legitimate cause for concern. However, discriminatory regimes that limit the exchange of advanced technologies to exclusive groups of States deny access to those crucial technologies to the developing countries, even for peaceful developmental purposes. Thus, a non-economic barrier has prevented the normal exchange of technology on a global basis. This runs counter to the spirit of global economic exchanges.

We should also take into account the growing energy needs, particularly in the developing world, which must be met without adversely affecting the environment. It must be recognized that the exclusive export control policies were initiated at a time when there were no global agreements that comprehensively addressed proliferation concerns. Recent events question the effectiveness of such exclusive arrangements in achieving their stated purpose of strengthening effective non-proliferation, in particular, their ability to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, the means of their delivery or related materials and technology.

We need to reorient our efforts to address issues of global proliferation concern. It is necessary to elaborate generally equitable, inclusive and universally acceptable arrangements regulating the transfer of materials and technologies related to advanced weapons systems, including weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We have consistently maintained that multilaterally negotiated and non-discriminatory agreements that are transparent and open to universal participation are the best way forward to address proliferation concerns regarding materials and technologies related to advance weapons systems, weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The reflection of that approach in multilateral disarmament agreements would ensure their effectiveness and improve the chances of their universality. At the Non-Aligned summit in Kuala Lumpur, a final document was issued and adopted in February this year that also reflected that point of view.

There is need today, more than ever before, to agree on an effective and transparent system of export controls of technologies and methodologies that would achieve the objectives of non-proliferation in all its aspects, while ensuring access to those technologies for peaceful purposes. This draft resolution hopes to encourage and support such a process.

India, along with the sponsors commends adoption of this draft resolution by this Committee and hopes that the draft will receive the wide support of the Committee.

Let me make two brief references to some other draft resolutions. The first relates to document A/C.1/58/L.1 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We have the pleasure to join other sponsors in supporting that draft resolution. We also take this opportunity to express our support for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.50 put forward by Sweden concerning the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). As Chairman-designate of the meeting of State parties to the Convention, to be held

at the end of November, India attaches considerable importance to the CCW process, which offers a unique opportunity and a forum for States of diverse security interests to harmonize and move forward in specific areas where progress is possible.

We also would like to support draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.3, which was put forward by the Russian Federation, on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. India has joined the consensus on this draft resolution since 1998 and supports the Russian Federation in its objective to bring forward this important draft resolution. As a country with substantial and growing capabilities and interests in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, we look forward to contributing to cooperative international efforts in that regard, in particular through the Group of Governmental Experts as has been proposed by the draft resolution in operative paragraph 4. In doing so, we would carry forward our work with regard to an extremely important emerging field of activity.

Mr. Broucher (United Kingdom): At this time I should like to return to the subject of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms on which I commented briefly a few days ago. The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the consensus report of the 2003 group of Governmental experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This was the fourth review of the Register and the first time since the establishment of this instrument in 1992 that agreement was reached on significant technical adjustments to the Register's categories.

The United Kingdom believes the report contains a number of significant recommendations which are designed to further improve the operation of the Register and enhance its global relevance. A number of delegations have already described the achievements of the group on artillery systems and man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). In the interests of good time management, I shall not repeat these points, but shall comment rather on the prospects for future progress. The full text of my written statement will be posted electronically on www.fco.gov.uk/ukdis.

The group identified a number of issues on which consensus could not be reached at this time, but to which further consideration should be given by the next review process. One area of particular importance to the United Kingdom and others is the potential for the Register to support the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects. There is significant potential for the Register to support global action in this area.

The United Nations Programme of Action highlighted the importance of transparency as an essential component of dealing with the problem of small arms and light weapons proliferation. It reads,

> "To encourage regions to develop, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, measures to enhance transparency with a view to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

In this regard, the United Kingdom encourages Member States that are in a position to do so, to submit data on their small arms and light weapons transfers, as part of the voluntary additional background information, to the Register. The United Kingdom will be undertaking to do so and hopes that this practice will be recognized by the time of the next regular review.

The United Kingdom believes that apart from technical adjustments to the seven categories of the Register, the scope of the Register should be expanded to include reporting on procurement through national production and military holdings. Merely having data on transfers is not enough. An adequate assessment of whether transfers and build-ups of conventional weapons are indeed destabilizing is difficult. Accurate assessments rely on a baseline — military holdings — and access to military technology from national production, in order to build the complete picture.

The increasing willingness of participating nations to provide such background information, including details of types, goes a long way towards satisfying this requirement and is to be further encouraged. Placing such information on the same footing as that for transfers would be a major contribution to the operation and usefulness of the Register.

The United Kingdom commends the Group of Experts for their recommendations and looks forward

to the further strengthening of, and greater participation in the Register.

While I have the floor I should like briefly to respond in an interactive way to the statement made by the representative of Canada about verification. In doing so I fully align myself with the statement already made by Italy on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom attaches considerable importance to verification and welcomes Canada's suggestion of further discussion of these issues. In particular we see merit in Canada's suggestion to make maximum use of existing machinery in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We would also see merit in the idea of a panel of experts on which the United Nations Secretary-General could call, when mandated by the Security Council, to carry out specific verification tasks.

However, we would have some reservations about creating new standing machinery, in particular in view of the resource implications that this would have. We agree that further discussion is needed of ways in which the expertise of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission could be retained.

Ms. Makupula (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The United Nations Register continues to be the most significant global transparency instrument in the field of conventional arms transfers, and as such, we would strongly encourage broader participation in the Register by all United Nations Member States. The report not only contains very useful information and statistics on conventional arms transfers, but importantly, information on the deliberations, conclusions and recommendations of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts.

South Africa is pleased to note that the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts made significant strides in the review and further development of the Register. This is the first periodic review of the Register that has yielded substantive results, and this exercise has underlined the importance of such regular re-examinations as it is vital that the Register develop into an instrument that is more widely perceived as being relevant, particularly among developing countries. In that context, the Group's recommendation that the artillery threshold be lowered from 100 mm to 75 mm is particularly welcome, as it will include reporting on transfers of more of the types of equipment that have been used in recent conflicts in Africa — such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Also, the inclusion of man-portable air defence systems in the missiles and missile launchers category represents a significant step in bringing the Register's categories in line with arms increasingly being used in the twenty-first century, and thus in contributing to the global fight against terror.

South Africa has noted that during the deliberations a number of other proposals were raised, but that the Group was not able to reach consensus on those issues. Importantly, my delegation is aware that the Group spent a significant amount of time discussing the issue of small arms and light weapons as the weapons of choice in conflicts in Africa and the rest of the developing world. In that context, it reflected on how transfers of those weapons could be included in the Register. We acknowledge that reporting on such weapons transfers might be difficult, but South Africa continues to believe that this is one area where the Register might gain some relevance for African countries.

South Africa's view is that, if this instrument is to gain broader support, it cannot be achieved by Member States alone. My delegation is aware that the Group spent some time discussing the support that the United Nations Secretariat could provide in the achievement of this goal. We note that the Group recognized the need to support the strengthening of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in order to improve the continuing operation of the Register. The Group concluded that the Department should actively support and promote the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a primary mission. The Department for Disarmament Affairs needs the necessary financial support to be able to do so.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to thank the Chairperson of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts, Ambassador Roberto García Moritán of Argentina, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Group. The success of the Group can in no small part be attributed to his engaging and facilitating style, his consultative approach, his patience — especially when that of some other members of the Group had run out — and his

enormous wealth of experience in multilateral diplomacy. We commend him for his tireless efforts.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): I have asked for the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.11, entitled "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)", on behalf of the African Group.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) was signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996. The Cairo Declaration adopted on that occasion emphasized that nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, enhanced global and regional peace and security. The signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba constitutes an important contribution by the African countries to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Considering that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East, would enhance African security and the viability an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, the draft resolution calls upon African States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty as soon as possible so that it may enter into force without delay. Furthermore, while expressing appreciation to the nuclear-weapon States that have signed the Protocols that concern them, it calls upon those States that have not yet ratified those Protocols to do so as soon as possible. It also urges those States contemplated in Protocol III to the Treaty that have not yet done so to take all necessary measures to ensure the speedy application of the Treaty to territories for which they are internationally responsible and that lie within the limits of the geographical zones established in the Treaty.

The draft resolution further calls on African States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that have not yet done so to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, pursuant to the Treaty. In so doing, they can satisfy the requirements of article 9 (b) of the Treaty of Pelindaba when it enters into force. They should also conclude additional protocols to the safeguards agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol, approved by the Board of Governors of the Agency on 15 May 1997.

The draft resolution is basically the same as the one adopted at the fifty-sixth session. It has always been adopted without a vote by the First Committee and the General Assembly, and it will be appreciated if it is similarly adopted without a vote at this session.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join in the discussion on the subject of verification that was started by Canada and continued by the representative of Sweden and by the representative of Italy, who was speaking on behalf of the European Union. In that context, I would like to mention the establishment of a permanent disarmament verification body within the United Nations.

The threats linked to the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are increasing. Until now, the international community, and most importantly, the Security Council or certain of its most eminent members, have tried to respond through the creation of a host of international instruments — treaties, conventions, export controls or diplomatic activities. The whole system was based on the implementation of international inspection mechanisms targeting specific types of weapons or specific crises. It has to be said that the results thus obtained have not always been satisfactory and that those existing instruments need to be strengthened so that they can be more effective.

At a meeting of the Security Council in New York on 19 March 2003, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, envisaged the establishment of a new, permanent organ — a disarmament body under the aegis of the United Nations. On the occasion of a speech made on 28 August 2003 at a conference of ambassadors in Paris, Minister de Villepin made some clarifications: the United Nations should be provided with the capacity to react rapidly and effectively in key areas; and France would also like to see the establishment of a disarmament body, which could be placed at the disposal of the United Nations Secretary-General under the authority of the Security Council. More recently, on 23 September 2003, the President of the Republic of France proposed the creation of a permanent inspection body under the authority of the Security Council.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the danger of seeing them fall into the hands of terrorists are among the major challenges the international community faces in the twenty-first century. We are collectively duty-bound to give the Security Council the means to deal with those new threats to international peace and security. The creation

of an integrated, multidisciplinary disarmament inspection body within the United Nations could address those concerns. We are not starting from a blank sheet. Indeed, considerable resources have already been invested in the domain of international verification, for example, in the United Nations Special Commission, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, inspections of conventional arms, and others.

That is why France believes that the best solution is for us to build on what already exists, using it to the best advantage. With this in mind, we bring up certain important questions, and the list is not exhaustive, with regard to this body. What mission should it have? What structure should it have? Where should it be situated? Where should it fit into the system? What will its governing principles be? What staff should serve it? What mandate will it have? What financing would be available to such a body?

In calling here for the establishment of a disarmament inspection body, the French delegation is trying to contribute to the thinking and to lay out paths for that thinking, suggesting a collective response to the major threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. The United Kingdom has offered ideas on the establishment of a committee of the Security Council on proliferation, and Sweden has thought along similar lines to create an international committee. The United States, through its President speaking in the current General Assembly, has announced an initiative to the Security Council. France has proposed that the Council meet at the level of heads of State to discuss the issue of proliferation.

And finally, as the Italian Presidency reminded us, the Council of Europe emphasized, in a statement made in Thessaloniki last June, its eagerness to increase its political, financial and technical support to agencies responsible for verification, to promote the role of the Security Council and to reinforce its ability to take up the challenge of proliferation. Like Sweden, France wanted to take this opportunity to stimulate discussion here in the First Committee and in the international community. Our hope is also to obtain from other members of this Committee further contributions to this debate.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): As I am speaking for the first time, I congratulate you and your fellow Bureau members on your election to your high offices.

Poland has joined the statement of the European Union in the general debate in which the Union presented its position on a large number of issues, including the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, at the national level, I would like to share a few thoughts on the Conference, mainly in the context of confidence-building.

Poland has always supported disarmament as one of the most important tools in building a more peaceful and secure world. My country has constantly been among the most active parties in various negotiations in this field, most recently in the Conference. Thus, my country strongly believes that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, has, and will continue to have, a profound role to play in strengthening international security, as well as in building trust and confidence among nations. Disarmament is not a goal in itself; it is a vehicle to take us to a better world. The Conference on Disarmament is also one of the best forums to carry out effective multilateralism, which is the basis for successfully meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We should focus on ideas that have the power to bring us closer in our understanding of international security. Enhanced transparency and confidence-building measures have shown themselves to have such strength. Our common endeavours, ranging from the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the regional implementation of the Programme of Action, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Ottawa Convention, help us to go beyond the traditional suspicions and lack of trust between nations.

In our opinion, one of the ideas we might concentrate our attention on during this session of the First Committee would be a positive attitude to best practices sharing. That is clearly very important in the area of confidence-building. The European experience — such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Open Skies Treaty — provides sound examples of the ability of nations to reach above narrowly interpreted national interests.

Many elements of the thinking behind those instruments could be considered in other regions and be adapted perhaps to other regions' historical traditions. We, for our part, would not only be prepared but also keen to learn from others.

In this context it is more than obvious that the role of the Conference on Disarmament is to provide States with the best possible conditions for closing the gaps between their positions in the search for consensus. In so doing, the Conference on Disarmament itself is one of the most important confidence-building mechanisms, which, unfortunately, still has not fulfilled its potential. The Conference is well prepared for negotiations when the right time comes and when issues are ripe for negotiations. We all know that. It does not mean that the Conference will hold negotiations every year. The difficulties are not the fault of the machinery there in Geneva. It depends on political will in respective capitals. We must always remember: it is for States to close those gaps, not for the Conference itself. It is up to the States to make the best use of the opportunities the Conference provides.

However, throughout the process of consultations within the Conference and as a result of it, after each exchange of views, we get an even better and clearer understanding of each other's positions. We are better able to understand how to move forward. This is a confidence-building process and that is of fundamental importance in a changed international security environment.

After the end of the bipolar world, we live in a world influenced by many uncertain factors. While discussing issues of nuclear disarmament, chemical and biological weapons, missiles, small arms, landmines and other conventional weapons, one of the first steps to make is to gain confidence among ourselves. The Conference on Disarmament should be a place where we can hold a comprehensive discussion on factors leading to specific measures that build the trust necessary to advance the disarmament and non-proliferation goals of the international community.

It is, certainly, difficult to come to terms with the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament while we face so many challenges. Seven years without a programme of work should come to an end. In our judgement, this Committee should be giving its full support for intercessional consultations to be continued by the Ambassadors of Japan and Kenya, as this Committee is directly interested in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Thus, this Committee should be a source of inspiration and bold thinking about possible actions in the Conference on Disarmament. It could reflect on such issues as how the Conference could be more in tune with today's challenges, and how to help the Conference start substantive work on what is mature enough to negotiate.

The last question is of particular importance. We reached consensus long ago on one issue at least, and we actually commenced work on that, and then we stopped. This is not only a question of a programme of work. Equally important, or even more important in our view, is the credibility of the Conference. How firm is our resolve to stand behind the consensus we have reached? It is my sincere hope that the Conference on Disarmament shall start substantial work very soon indeed, early next year.

Mr. Issa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It pleases me to present to you on behalf of the countries members of the Arab League, a draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" in document A/C.1/58/L.23. This draft resolution reflects the concern of the countries of the Middle East, in fact the whole of the international community, with regard to the danger resulting from the possibility of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and the continued existence of nuclear facilities in the region that are not subject to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

This concern has been expressed at different conferences held to review the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the last of which was held in the year 2000. This draft resolution emphasizes the need for all countries in the region to take serious and operational steps towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East, for the accession of all countries in the region to the NPT and for their compliance with all its provisions. It calls upon Israel as the only country in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT to do so without delay and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft resolution also calls upon the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly in its next

session a report concerning the progress achieved in this connection.

I would like to submit also a draft resolution entitled "Establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East". Egypt has submitted this draft resolution for more than twenty-five years now. The draft resolution reflects the priority of the parties concerned that, practical steps should be taken to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free zone and subject all nuclear activities in the region to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft also calls upon all countries of the region to refrain from developing nuclear weapons, testing such weapons, acquiring them or deploying such nuclear weapons in their territory, until a nuclear-weapons-free zone is established in the Middle East

The Chairman: As I have mentioned previously, in accordance with the Committee's program of work and timetable, the third and last phase of the Committee's work, namely action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 62 to 80 will begin on Monday, 27 October. In this connection, I would like to inform the delegations that a paper grouping together the draft resolutions in several clusters, contained in document A/C.1/58/CRP.3, has been made available for your consideration.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined the sponsors of the following draft resolution. Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1: Bhutan, Burundi, Estonia, Guyana, Hungary, India, Madagascar and Sri Lanka; L.9: Indonesia and Belarus; L.10: Belarus; L.11: Mali; L.28: Bangladesh; L.21: Cambodia; L.38: Bahamas and Indonesia; L.43 Bosnia and Herzegovina; L.46: Nigeria and Bosnia and Herzegovina; L.49: Mongolia; L.50: India; L.51: Honduras, Slovakia and Switzerland; L.52: Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania and Ukraine; L.53: Afghanistan; L.8, L.9, L.12, L.13, L.16 and L.50: Mali; and L.6, L.11, L.21, L.24, L.32 and L.48: Nauru.

The Chairman: The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. sharp in Conference Room 4, and, as I indicated, we will start with those speakers who were moved from this morning's list of speakers to tomorrow. We will start with United Arab Emirates, followed by Indonesia and Norway.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.